

Barrier Free Accessibility

Note: highlighted phrases provide hyperlinks to websites.

Architectural Barriers Act (ABA)

The [Architectural Barriers Act](#) (Public Law 90-480) of 1968, as amended through 1984 (42 U.S.C. 4151-4157), requires access to facilities designed, constructed, altered, or leased with Federal money. The ABA is not as well known as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Its relative obscurity is apparent when people ask what ADA requirements are necessary for Federal buildings. However, the ADA has increased the awareness of persons with disabilities of their rights and our responsibilities to provide barrier free accessibility in Federal facilities.

Uniform Federal Accessibility Standard (UFAS)

The standard (design requirements) used to enforce the ABA is the [Uniform Federal Accessibility Standard](#) (UFAS) published as Federal Standard 795 in 1984. Current edition is dated April 1, 1988. Generally, every Federal agency responsible for funding building design, construction, alteration, or leasing is responsible for ensuring that the design requirements are met. The standard used to enforce the ADA is the [ADA Accessibility Guidelines](#) (ADAAG) published in 1991. Current edition is dated January 1998. Some agencies have required compliance with both UFAS and ADAAG – see Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Planning and Design Policy Statement (PDPS) 94-01. Both standards contain scoping and technical requirements for accessibility to buildings and facilities by individuals with disabilities.

[NAVFAC PDPS 94-01, Barrier Free Design Accessibility Requirements, 26 May 1994 \(Revised 1 June 1997\)](#)

It is the policy of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) to comply with the UFAS and the ADAAG - to the extent that whichever one provides the greatest accessibility will govern. However, the UFAS contain exceptions for certain military facilities (paragraph 4.1.4) which continue to be applicable. Therefore, all buildings and facilities involving new construction, additions, or alterations, worldwide, which are open to the public or to limited segments of the public, or which may be visited by the public in the conduct of normal business, will be designed and constructed to be accessible to disabled individuals. Every building and facility should be designed to ensure access by disabled individuals unless the facility is specifically restricted to use only by able-bodied military personnel during the useful life of the building or facility. However, even in the instances where the military exclusion would apply, compliance with accessibility standards and guidelines is recommended, since the intended use of the facility may change with time.

[Access Board](#)

The United States Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) was created in 1973. It serves the nation as the only independent federal agency whose primary mission is accessibility for people with disabilities. The most important functions of the Access Board are to: develop minimum guidelines and requirements for standards issued under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA), provide technical assistance on those guidelines and standards, and enforce the Architectural Barriers Act. The Board does not enforce the ADA. General enforcement of the ADA is by the [Department of Justice](#).

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Most of us are familiar with the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) of 1968 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. However, many of us are not aware of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs and services conducted or assisted by the Federal Government. If the program or service is not accessible to disabled persons, 3 possible scenarios for providing access to the program or service are triggered. They are: (1) relocate the program or service to an accessible location, (2) offer the same program or service in another location that is accessible, or (3) make the facility where the program or service is provided accessible.

The above information is a brief overview of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. It applies primarily to existing facilities, and usually triggers the initiation of a project for compliance with barrier free requirements.

What's New

On November 16, 1999, the Access Board published the [ADA/ABA Accessibility Guidelines Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) (64 FR 62248) for public comment. The Access Board revised and updated its accessibility guidelines for buildings and facilities covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA). As a result of this revision and update, the guidelines for the ADA and ABA have been consolidated in a single document. The new document will include three revised and updated parts: (1) ADA scoping requirements, (2) ABA scoping requirements, and (3) technical requirements which both scoping sections will reference.

Publications and Documents

In addition to UFAS and ADAAG, the Access Board distributes a number of useful [publications](#) such as: UFAS Checklist, ADAAG Checklist, UFAS Retrofit Manual, and Access Currents (Access Board's bi-monthly newsletter).

The following documents are also accessible on the [Construction Criteria Base](#) (CCB):

- Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) published as Federal Standard 795,
- UFAS Accessibility Checklist
- UFAS Retrofit Manual
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990
- ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities
- ADA Accessibility Guidelines Checklist for Buildings and Facilities

The path is: Libraries > Regulations Library > Accessibility Regulations > Documents.
If using CDs, this information is located on disc A.

Other Resources and Links

A variety of public and private sector entities provide information on barrier free accessibility. The Access Board has compiled an extensive list that is linked here. This list is provided for information purposes only and the Access Board and NAVFAC make no warranty, expressed or implied, that the information obtained from these sources is accurate or correct.

Feedback/Assistance

If you have suggestions or questions, please contact Mr. Dennis O. Talton, R.A., NAVFAC Criteria Office, DSN 262-4211, (757) 322-4211, taltondo@efdlant.navfac.navy.mil.